

Record

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Miss. Baptists answer call for Iraq relief

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Call it a "gift of love," as Mississippi Baptists rallied to the call from the International Mission Board (IMB) to provide food boxes for hunger relief in Iraq.

The numbers were impressive. According to statistics compiled by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), 3,316 boxes of food were collected, weighing a total of 232,050 pounds or

Booneville, heads up one of the many associations that participated in the effort. "We sent letters out to all the churches," Prather said, "and talked about it at our executive committee meeting. We were receiving calls up to the last minute from churches wanting to participate."

Clif Evans of First Church, Brooklyn, accompanied George Berger, AMD for Lebanon Association in Hattiesburg, to the fairgrounds to deliver the association's boxes. "Our church felt that we saw the need of those people," Evans said, "and through sharing Christian love to the Iraqis in this way it would help change their attitude toward us." Berger and Evans delivered a total of 96 boxes.

Nelda Brown, a member of First Church, Columbus, started out with a box from her family. "I asked around for some more boxes," she said, "and before I knew it I ended up with 33."

"A local moving company — Bond Relocation Systems — donated some of the packing boxes," Brown continued. "Les and Bobbie Perkins and Mel

Hawton from Bond actually ended up donating a truck to take the boxes to Jackson. Other churches found out about the truck and donated food boxes, too."



GROUP EFFORT — Members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit transfer a truckload of Iraq food boxes packed by Baptists in Winston and Noxubee Associations (BR photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

The campaign to help feed the Iraqi people is being managed by the International Mission Board and supported in this state by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.



LAW, GRACE, AND TRUTH — Each food box for Iraq was affixed with a label (above) that expressed John 1:17 in Arabic: "For the law was given to Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (NIV)

116 tons. The value of the food collected was estimated to be \$195,467, and an additional \$10,992 was donated in cash gifts. All Baptist associations in Mississippi sent boxes, which represented 572 Mississippi Baptist churches and 3,511 volunteers.

A letter went out from the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union to Baptist churches all across the state, asking associations, churches, and individuals to prepare food boxes for distribution in Iraq. The boxes were delivered to either the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson or Camp Garaywa in Clinton on May 20-21.

The dry contents of each "family box" were chosen to help provide food for a family of five for approximately one month. Because of cultural and dietary needs, contents were very specific, including rice, all-purpose flour, sugar, navy beans, lentils, salt, loose tea, and powdered milk. Items were packed in 1.5 cubic-foot boxes. One box weighed about 70 pounds and cost approximately \$60 to prepare. Donors were asked not to put Bibles or other literature in the boxes, but each box bore a label with John 1:17 in Arabic.

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force was instrumental in receiving and processing the boxes. Teams spent two-and-a-half days handling, transferring, and loading the boxes at the fairgrounds and Camp Garaywa, preparing the boxes for shipment to Richmond, Va., and eventual delivery to Iraq in June.

J.C. Prather, Associational Missions Director (AMD) for Prentiss Association in



MOVING DAY — Jim Reppeto (on ramp) of Benton, was one of several volunteers who handled food boxes for Iraq at the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson on May 20-21. Over 3,000 boxes, each weighing approximately 70 pounds, were sent from Mississippi to Richmond, Va., with Iraq being the final destination. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

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A little more sunshine, please

The first full week of May brought to a merciful end the 17-month-long saga of the missionaries and the faith statement. By the adjournment of the meeting of trustees of the International Mission Board (IMB) that week in Framingham, Mass., a total of 77 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) international missionaries had retired, resigned, or been terminated due to their refusal to sign an affirmation of the revised 2000 version of the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM).

Many people felt that affirming the document was as simple (and important) as agreeing to a job description. Many other people believe that forcing missionaries to affirm the provisions of the BFM is creedal and therefore antithetical to Baptist history as they understand it.

The debate has reached an end, action has been taken, and it's time to move on with the Lord's work. One thing is for certain, however: Southern Baptists in the pews have been left in the dark about one of the most important aspects of this story.

In a letter dated January 21, 2002, IMB President Jerry Rankin requested that the agency's missionaries affirm that they would conduct their ministries in accordance with the 2000 BFM. His explanation is excerpted from the letter as follows:

We already had in place a policy that if any missionary taught or practiced doctrinal positions in any way contrary to the BF&M that it would be grounds for termination. Our board felt that these policies and actions provided adequate accountability to the SBC and expressed confidence and trust in our missionaries.

However, this issue has continued to generate controversy throughout the convention and suspicion regarding some related to Southern Baptist entities who may not be in agreement with what Southern Baptists have identified as the common confession of our faith. There are many who feel strongly that those being supported by the denomination should be willing to pledge affirmation and support for the current BF&M, especially those serving with the mission boards. Failure to ask for this affirmation is creating suspicion that there are IMB personnel whose beliefs and practices are inconsistent with those represented by

Southern Baptists... Signing this affirmation protects you from charges of heresy behind your back while you are overseas and cannot defend yourself. It will also disarm those who may be trying to use the BF&M to divide Southern Baptists and isolate the IMB from other agencies and state conventions that have endorsed the current revision.

Many Southern Baptists were surprised to learn from Rankin's letter that the integrity of the SBC's international missionaries, quite a few of whom had faithfully served on the mission field for 20-30 years, was now being questioned by anonymous critics — anonymous because Rankin did not identify any of them in his letter and has declined to do so on several occasions since then.

With no firm identifications of the missionaries' detractors, Southern Baptists were left in the dark and unable determine if these people were at all qualified to level the very serious charge of heresy against people they've likely never met. Were they educated and experienced in the study of doctrine and theology to the extent that such an accusation could be taken seriously? Had they closely studied the teachings and actions of the missionaries over an extended period?

Were they and their churches longtime supporters of the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, without which there would be no Southern Baptist missionaries?

Were they current or former IMB trustees or missionaries, who might have been able to back up their accusations with facts and figures? Was there proof in the form of written statements, sermons, and lectures? Was there any audio or video evidence of the missionaries' heresy?

No doubt Rankin and the IMB trustees

"AND WE PRAY FOR THOSE MEMBERS WHO, WHILE NOT IN MATERIAL BREACH, ARE NONETHELESS NOT IN FULL COMPLIANCE WITH THY PROGRAM."



were within their rights to undertake the actions they did, but the process certainly could have used a little more sunshine.

Editors of state Baptist newspapers receive anonymous letters every week. The Baptist Record is no exception. Most of the letters are venomous, unsubstantiated attacks on the cowardly letter writer's church enemies, and all go straight to the trash can without another thought.

Perhaps Rankin and the trustees did the right thing; perhaps they didn't — but surely Southern Baptist missionaries deserved more respect than they received when it came to the faceless, nameless accusations of heresy.

Allowing anonymous voices to control such an important process of our convention brings disgrace on us all.

GUEST OPINION:

Retire from, or retire to?

By Jerry W. Mixon

Director, Stewardship Department
Miss. Baptist Convention Board



Larry Burkette, financial expert, estimates that only two percent of people who retire at 65 will be financially free. He said 45% will be dependent on relatives while 30% will become dependent on charity. In Mississippi alone we have many retired pastors and widows who live on or near the poverty level. This means that all of us — the church, pastors, and staff — need to do a better job of planning for the future.

Churches will soon be drafting their new budgets. It is time now to give consideration to what your church does for the staff in relation to retirement. If you discover that your staff is not in the Southern Baptist Convention's retirement plan, then one call to the annuity representative, Robin Nichols, is where you start: (800) 748-1651, ext. 226 or e-mail rnichols@mbcb.org. Pastors and staff may also use this number and e-mail address for advice. The earlier they start saving for those final years, the better off they will be.

If we live long enough, all of us will come to the time of retirement. I can hardly believe that I am now looking down the age barrel of retirement and someone is about to pull the trigger. However, I am not going to retire. Let me explain. I have no desire to retire from the Convention Board. I only plan to retire to something else. The emphasis will not be on leaving something but going to something. Each of us should begin now to pray and plan to move from present employment to another employment. This will make the reclining years just as

productive for the Lord.

Finally, to pastors and staff I would say your greatest gift is your family. Your highest call is not worship but your wife. Your greatest demand is not your sermon but your son. Your loftiest duty is your daughter. They don't need homiletics; they need a hug. They want time, not treasure.

When one pastor left the local church to come to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, his church had a special service. His daughter asked to say a few words in the service. She said she had discussed it

with her brother, and they decided that the best church their dad had served was — I know that pastor was praying, "Dear Lord, let her say this church" — the church they had had in their home.

All of us need not plan to retire from but retire to another place of service. Churches need to plan retirement benefits. Pastors and staff must save for those final years, and all of us need to spend more time with our families.

A friend of mine was getting his family into the car when a church member asked, "Pastor, what are you doing today?" He responded, "I'm spending the day off with my family." She remarked, "Well, you know the devil never takes a day off." Bearing a big smile he said, "I know, but I am not patterning my life after the devil."

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Backpackers map people groups of China

RURAL CHINA (BP) — Wearing the same pair of socks for a week, dining on soupy Chinese noodle and veggies for breakfast, shampooing in a creek, and snacking on energy bars are only a few of the many unique aspects of hiking through China's countryside.

Doug McTavish and Stephen Faulkner (not their real names) know this firsthand. McTavish, age 24, and Faulkner, age 30, are not on an expedition but a two-year assignment to share the Gospel of Christ.

They are part of a team of six backpackers who trek cattle paths looking for the isolated villages of the people group among whom they work.

The team pinpoints locations on handheld global positioning systems, takes pictures, counts houses, and draws maps of communities. All the information is eventually coordinated into trekking routes and compiled into notebooks for use by future prayerwalking, evangelism, and ministry teams.

"What they do is so important," says the worker who supervises them and coordinates strategy. "I feel it is my responsibility that these people have a chance to hear the Gospel in a way they can understand it. I thought, 'How are we going to do that?' The people are so

spread out. The task appears overwhelming, but we decided that if we knew where they were, we could reach them with the Gospel."

The process of locating vil-

nity, McTavish and Faulkner regularly have their own followers as children gather in their wakes. Spontaneous games of soccer or basketball often endear the two to vil-



BEAUTIFUL VIEW — Sore legs and majestic vistas are the bane and blessing of X-treme backpackers following mountain trails through regions of China. Workers are scaling such heights to document the people groups of the region. (BP photo)

lages often provides humorous antidotes to very strenuous travel. For instance, McTavish shared about the time they were invited to eat with one family.

"Dude, she pulled out a hog's head — everything from the ears forward — and put it on the fire, turned to us and asked, 'Can you stay for supper?' We figured a way to gracefully get out of that one."

The people that they encounter are traditionally animistic — worshiping trees, rivers and mountains — but openness to the Gospel continues to grow.

When they enter a commu-

lagers. Both are mildly conversant in the Mandarin language of the area.

"We take very seriously the idea of being salt and light wherever we go," Faulkner said. "We know others will be coming behind us with the Gospel."

Faulkner felt compelled to build God's kingdom instead of his own by anonymously preparing the way for the Gospel.

He felt that God said, "You don't need Mountain Dew and Papa John's to survive."

Circumstances during their travels have forced these young men to lean on God for direction. Once, they literally asked God for direction when they were faced with a fork on their trail.

"Like, out of nowhere these guys came out of the fields and told us which direction the village was and that we were almost there," Faulkner said.

"All this changes your perspective," McTavish said. "When we come to an isolated village and I pray for some guy who is 80 years old, and then I know that I am probably the first Christian to ever pray for him, that is a pretty awesome thought."

A byproduct of surviving the smell of five-day-old socks has also been an immense friendship. "We are with each other 24/7," Faulkner says. "We even hang out together when we don't have to. Our interests are so similar that — from the very start — we got along well."

McTavish and Faulkner recount the story of how God might be preparing a man to receive Christ.

Record

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Looking back

10 years ago

A search committee seeking a president for the Foreign Mission Board reaches into the ranks of its overseas administrators and unanimously nominates Jerry A. Rankin for the post. Mississippi Baptists respond enthusiastically to the announcement that their native son was nominated.

20 years ago

Mississippi Baptists rally to the need of their stricken neighbors as massive amounts of rainwater entering the Pearl River basin floods homes in the northeast section of Jackson. Flooding also struck other areas of the state, displacing over 500 families.

50 years ago

A writer to The Baptist Record states, "I think Jesus will be displeased with the softball at church but the devil well pleased... let us be satisfied with the preaching of the Gospel of Christ ... I do not want to bring the house of the Lord down to a soup stand and a headquarters for athletes."

Egg creation stirs ethical questions

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Success with mice has scientists believing that someday they will be able to create human eggs in the laboratory, thus allowing homosexuals to have "biological" children and creating a host of ethical concerns.

As reported in the journal *Science* and explained in *The Washington Post*, scientists have used mouse embryonic stem cells to create mouse eggs in the laboratory. Interestingly, the mouse eggs were created from both male and female cells — indicating that males have the biological capacity to produce eggs, the *Post* said.

If duplicated in humans, homosexual couples theoretically could attempt to have their own biological child — with one man supplying the sperm and the other man supplying the laboratory-produced eggs having his biological material. A surrogate mother would be necessary to carry the baby.

So far it is simply science fiction but if tried, two homosexual men could start the process by creating an embryonic clone of one of the men, a report on *New Scientist's* website explained. The cloning process would begin by taking a donor egg and removing its genetic material. Then, the genetic material of the man's cell — taken from any part of the body — would be removed and inserted into the egg. A jolt of electricity would begin cell division, thus producing an embryo. (A sperm is not needed.)

The embryo would be destroyed in order to harvest stem cells, which would then be manipulated to produce an egg, which, scientists say, would have the man's genetic material.

That egg would be combined with the other man's sperm in the laboratory to create an embryo, which would then be implanted in a surrogate mother and carried to term. The baby would have three parents — two male and one female.

The research was conducted by scientists at the University of Pennsylvania and in France.

Ministry Assistants hold annual conference

By Linda Jenkins
Correspondent

Ministry Assistants from throughout the state braved flooded highways, took alternate routes, followed detours, and avoided washed-out bridges to make their way to Camp Garaywa, Clinton, for the annual Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Conference on April 7-8.

The event started on the Monday following the "great Sunday flood" in central Mississippi. However, that in no way deterred one of the largest-ever number of attendees at the 2003 conference.

The construction and renovations taking place on the Garaywa campus merely added authenticity to the conference theme, *Trading Spaces*, based on the popular television series.

Conference sessions were designed to help the ministry assistants add polish and put finishing touches on their minds, hearts, personalities, work space, daily routines, and futures.

Conference leaders were readily spotted by the hard hats that they wore. The two-day agenda, planned by Julia C. Field of Amory, included praise and worship, inspiration, "homework assignments" (divided conference sessions), a business session, and a Monday night banquet.

Constitution and By-Laws changes "officially" named all Mississippi Baptist church secretaries, Baptist Building secretaries, ladies who serve in secretarial positions on college campuses, other institutions



NEW OFFICERS — Officers for the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association are (from left) Lisa Thornton, Monroe Association, Becker, Secretary-Treasurer; Linda Coleman, 2nd Vice-President, Center Ridge Church, Yazoo City; Juila Field, outgoing President, Meadowood Church, Amory; Robbille Linley, Winston Association, Louisville, President; and Sharon Brewer, Rankin Association, Brandon, 1st Vice-President. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

and agencies, as "ministry assistants" to come in line with other states and conventions.

Praise time was under the direction of Charlotte Ready, minister of music at Monticello Church, Monticello.

Popular national women's conference speaker, management consultant, and author Gaye Martin of Florida entertained and inspired the group with four presentations over the two-days. Banquet entertainment was provided by Lloyd and Rita Sweatt from

Amory's Meadowood Church.

An on-site Lifeway Christian store, door prizes, excellent camp food, and a silent auction were conference "extras."

Representatives from the Annunity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention were on hand to guide the ministry assistants in planning for the future with retirement benefits.

The annual state-wide meeting is sponsored each April by the Mississippi Baptist Ministry Assistants Association and the Pastor/Leadership Develop-

ment Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The conference is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

For more information on the ministry assistants association, contact Kay McDonnell, Pastor/Leadership Development Department, MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3305 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 305. E-mail: kmcdonnell@mbcb.org.

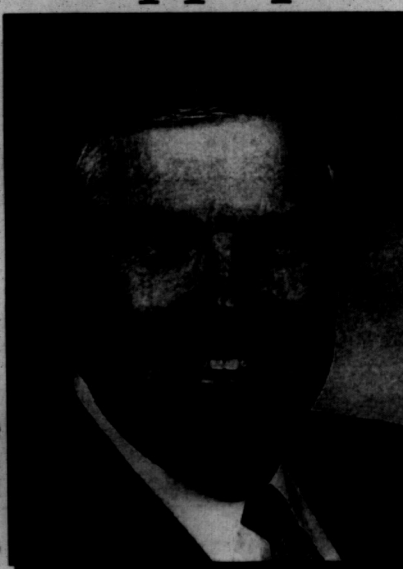
Former Mississippi pastor tapped as Georgia editor

ATLANTA (BP and local reports) — J. Gerald Harris, pastor of Eastside Church in Marietta, Ga., and former pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, has been elected editor of *The Christian Index*, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC).

Harris, age 62, came to Georgia in 1990 as pastor of Peachtree Corners Church in Norcross, where he served for four years. He moved to Norcross from the pastorate of Colonial Heights Church in Jackson, where he served for 10 years.

In Mississippi, he served as president of the Mississippi Baptist Pastors' Conference and as vice president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He also wrote a series of devotions for *The Baptist Record*, newsjournal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Harris served as GBC president in 1999 and has been an active member on a variety of committees, including the GBC executive committee, administrative committee, budget planning committee, and nominating committee (on which he served as chairman). He also served as chairman of the literature distribution committee for the 1994 Super Bowl outreach and is a current trustee of Mercer University.



Harris

On the national level he is currently serving on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee. He has served on the SBC Resolutions Committee and on the board of the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) in Nashville and Criswell College in Dallas.

Harris has written for a variety of denominational publications, especially for *LifeWay Christian Resources*. For that publishing arm of the SBC, he has written devotions for *Open Windows* and *HomeLife*

magazine. He also has authored two books, *Pardoned to be Priests*, a book of sermons published by Broadman Press in 1988; and *Olympic Heroes, World-Class Athletes Winning at Life*, published by Broadman and Holman in 1996.

He has also written Sunday School lessons for the *Baptist Courier*, the newsjournal of South Carolina Baptists.

Harris was born Nov. 26, 1940 in Hickory, N.C., and accepted Christ in 1950 at First Church of Valdese, N.C. The same church called him to preach as a high school senior and ordained him in 1961.

He has a bachelor's degree from Mercer University, a master of theology degree from Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and a doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla. (now relocated in Greater Atlanta). He was alumnus of the year for 1997 for Southeastern Seminary.

Harris and his wife, the former Martha Jean Maxwell of Newnan, are parents of a daughter, Miriam, who is married to Billy Godwin, pastor of Ephesus Church in Douglasville; and twin sons John Mark and Gerald David.

Harris expressed appreciation to Georgia Baptists for considering him for the state level ministry position.

"I see *The Christian Index* as the instrument whereby Georgia Baptists are connected for the purpose of Empowering Kingdom Growth," he said. "I have discovered that there are a multiplicity of wonderful, God-honoring missions and ministries taking place in our churches from St. Marys to Ringold, and that lives are being changed daily."

"I look forward to getting that good news into the hands and hearts of Georgia Baptists. I believe that the paper should primarily focus on news that encourages and uplifts. The writer of Hebrews said that we should 'consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works ... exhorting one another: and so much the more, as [we] see the day approaching' (Hebrews 10: 24-25)."

Workshop focuses on hard-to-reach family

WALTERS, Okla. (BP) — They've seen you at your worst. They know your weaknesses. They remember most of your sins. They are aware that you are far from perfect. Perhaps those are the reasons it's so hard to witness to family members — they know all your inconsistencies and will never forget them; you don't feel you have credibility before lost family members.

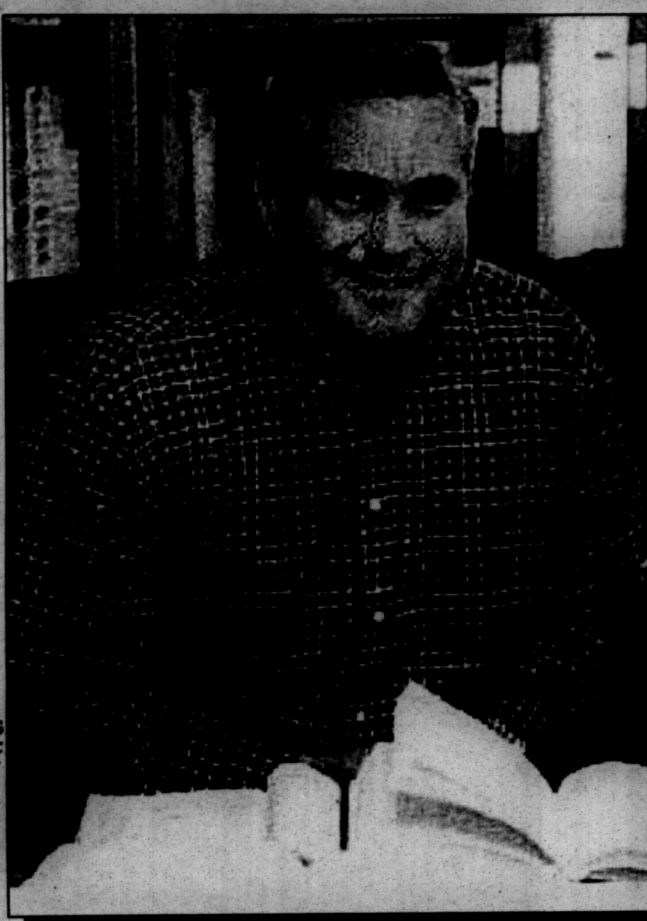
That's the premise of Tony Nickel's workshop, *Bringing Them Home: Leading Your Unsaved Family Members to Christ*. Nickel, pastor of First Church in Walters, Okla., said the idea for the workshop came from being pastor of three churches and noticing how many wives were coming to church without their husbands, and how many families attended church without one or more of their members.

"The ladies with unbelieving husbands were always in fear of coming to church because their husbands wanted them home," Nickel said. "I also noticed that no one was doing anything about the extended family. We have [evangelism programs such as] CWT, EE and FAITH, but none of these specifically addresses this issue."

The program helps Christians regain credibility with their family members. The program got started in 1994 when he preached a message that addressed how to witness to unsaved family members.

"At a home prayer group meeting six months later, a church member said she did what I said in the message and led her brother to the Lord," Nickel recalled. "I couldn't believe anyone remembered what I preached six months ago, let alone using it to lead someone to Christ."

He said a survey of members at his church indicated nearly one-third admitted living with either an unsaved spouse or



Nickel

child, and others said they had extended family members with whom they have close relationships who have not accepted Jesus as Savior.

He said his five-year-old son, who has already made a profession of faith, knows what sin is, and knows when his Daddy sins, and tells him.

"When I say, 'You're right, Ethan, I was wrong and I'm sorry,' that satisfies him," Nickel explained. "If we can say we are wrong, people can cope with that, and they have respect for us."

Nickel said he doesn't feel the call to be an evangelist, but believes a part of the pastoral ministry is to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

"This is a process, not a knock-on-a-door, get saved, come back to church and report type of thing," he noted. "It took me six years to get a lost family member saved."

He told of one lady who went through the course who had a brother she hadn't spoken to in 16 years. Because he is not yet a Christian, she decided to spend more time with him. He opened up and told her why he had been mad at her for years — she scratched his bicycle when he was 8 years old.

Now, because of her going through the process of reconciliation with him, they are talking about the Bible and the Lord, Nickel said.

"All this is is living the way God wants you to live," Nickel said. "Jesus, in Acts 1:8, says we are to be witnesses in Jerusalem [and] Judea, in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the Earth. Our Jerusalem is where we live."

"How can we say we are doing what Jesus wants us to do if we go out on Monday night and witness, and have lost family members at home?"

Editor's note: For more information on Bringing Them Home, contact Nickel at First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 341, Walters, Okla., 73572, or call (580) 875-3341.

Space available at Gulfshore conferences

Spaces are available for the following conferences at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian:

- **June 12-16** — V Youth Conference (Mississippi Baptist Convention Board)
- **June 24-28** — Young Musicians' Conference (Church Music)
- **July 1-5** — Family Enrichment Conference (Discipleship and Family Ministry)
- **July 5-9** — HeartSong '03 Youth Music Camp (Church Music)
- **July 10-12** — Music Leadership Conference (Church Music)
- **July 24-26** — Growing Churches (Discipleship and Family ministry)
- **July 24-26** — Church Media Library Conferences (Communication Services)
- **August 7-9** — Pastors and Wives Conference (Pastor/Leadership Development)
- **Sept. 30-Oct. 2** — IV Senior Adult Conference (Discipleship and Family Ministry)

Information on the various conferences may be secured from the sponsoring department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, as listed after the conference above, at (601) 292-3218 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Spaces are also available for the following Lifeway sponsored youth camps:

- **July 19-24** — II Centrifuge
- **July 26-31** — III Centrifuge

For Centrifuge information and reservations, call (877) CAMP-123 or write CENTRIFUGE, P.O. Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37202.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Few people have the opportunity of working with, around, or for good folks all the time, in every way. Occasionally, you will probably run into a person who is difficult to get along with. It could happen at work. It may happen at home. There is even the possibility of it happening at church. The fact is, it is just hard to get along with some folks. Others most likely struggle along with you in dealing with these "difficult" people. I actually believe that sometimes these difficult people can't even get along with themselves!

You know the type. They just seem to generate animosity and antagonism. They walk around with their eyes surveying the landscape for a fight. Their hands stay closer positioned to a fist than open to be helpful.

If you happen to be one of those folks that unfortunately has to occasionally be around someone like that, then you surely must be wondering, "How in the world do you deal with these difficult folks?" Well, there is no simple, easy answer because, as a rule, they will continually change their ways of being difficult. They seem to find new, creative, and innovative ways to shock and test you. Yet, surely there is some help or hope out there somewhere!



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Several years ago I was privileged to know and be blessed by a wonderful lady who had spent her life sightless. Miss Annie Denman was over a hundred years old when she died, but Miss Annie filled that century living, caring, writing, encouraging, and blessing others. For years she lived alone and took care of herself, her home, and her yard even though she was blind. Miss Annie loved flowers! She loved any kind of flowers. She especially loved roses, but her absolute favorite flower was the sunflower. She loved to go out early in the morning and "look" at her flowers.

Of course, for Miss Annie, "seeing" was touching. You can just imagine, as she moved around in her yard, what she "saw" as she felt the velvet petals of a rose, or the large face of a sunflower. Yet, "looking" at those beautiful flowers at times created problems. As you well know, accompanying the rose bushes are the thorns and, as you also may be aware, the sunflowers

attract bees from all over. So, in the face of the possibility of getting stuck or stung, Miss Annie learned to go out and "look" at her flowers with her gloves on.

Moving about the yard, she would enjoy the blessings of the beauty of her flowers without being hurt by the problems. From that brilliant lady, who could "see" better than most of us even though she was blind, I gleaned some wonderful lessons about dealing with difficult people.

One of the lessons that I learned was not to miss out on the good things, the beautiful things, the sweet-smelling things of life, simply because there is a thorn somewhere or someone with a stinger out. I have watched as most of us zero in on the one thorn that is sticking out, or we forget everything around us as we swat at or run from the bee that could potentially hurt us. So, lesson number one: Don't miss the blessings, the sights, the sounds, and the good smells of life simply because someone comes around with their stinger out!

The second lesson I learned was, as you enjoy the blessings of life, it may be necessary to put some gloves on in order to avoid the pain. The balance that we bring to life's experiences and in dealing with the difficult people in life, is that we don't need the hurt and the pain involved; yet, we need to realize that even difficult people have gifts and abilities and bring good things to life's table if we could just recognize them and learn to cope with them.

When Jesus instructed His disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, He was indicating that life would have some difficult situations and no doubt we would have to figure out how to deal with difficult people. Let me encourage you to slip your gloves on and get on out there and enjoy life!

The last lesson I learned in this experience was to try not to be one of those difficult people. I'm talking to me, not you! I just want to remember that every meeting in life is not filled with ulterior motives, every conversation is not a fight, every relationship is not a battleground, and every day is not placed with bitterness.

So, put a smile on your face and, if need be, put your gloves on and enjoy this day, for... "This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Faith Church, Jackson, will hold VBS, The Great Kingdom Caper, on June 2-6 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. For more information, call (601) 368-2983.

VBS will be held at Society Hill Church, Oakvale, June 9-

13 from 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will hold VBS on June 9-13 from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Registration is June 8 from 5-7 p.m.

Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, will hold a community sing on June 21 at 6 p.m. The Reeves Family will be the featured musicians. All area musicians are invited to participate.

Amaziah Church, Hickory Flat, had a baby dedication on May 11. Pictured (from left) are Michael Howell and his wife with Cody, Derrick Howell and his wife with Zachery, Dana Holmes with Ike, and Michael Boothe and his wife with

Karegan. Leonard Howell is pastor. The Brotherhood men of Amaziah are currently constructing the first baptistry in the church.

Calvary Church, Canton, had a child dedi-

cation on Easter Sunday. Six children, along with their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents were present.

Mt. Zion Church, Florence, recently dedicated the site of their new church campus. Members marched from the old location to the new and sang hymns. Don Kleeb is pastor.

The Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Birmingham, Ala., has launched DirectorofMissions.com, an interactive Web site designed to communicate with directors of missions, associational staff and other missions-minded leaders. Associational leaders can find updated information such as

news releases, news regarding missions experiences, associational links, reviews, highlights of new resources, and articles. For more information, visit <http://www.DirectorOfMissions.com> or call (205) 995-4808.

The youth of First Church, Kosciusko, presented a musical, Testify of Love, on April 27. Along with the vocalists participating were the Hearts and Hands puppet ministry, the I.M.A.G.E. drama team, and the sign language ministry. They took a three day choir tour traveling to Oxford, Bruceton, Tenn., and Nashville, Tenn.



Children's Dedication, Calvary Church, Canton



Baby Dedication, Amaziah Church, Hickory Flat



Youth Choir of First Church, Kosciusko

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When: Phase I construction

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BAPTIST COLLEGE & SEMINARY NEWS



Wiley and Polson

David Arthur Wiley, Jackson, and Edward Clayton Polson, Ridgeland, received Master of Divinity degrees from George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University's commencement ceremonies held on May 17. Polson also received a Master of Social Work. Pictured (from left) are Wiley and Polson.

evangelism for the 2002-2003 year. Khalaf is available for revivals and preaching engagements and can be reached at (601) 249-0491. Pictured (from left) are Chuck Kelley, President of NOBTS, and Khalaf.

Honors Day was recently held at William Carey College (WCC). Mandy Tilley, Lucedale,

ni president. Student Government Association President Sunny Salters presented the Outstanding Faculty Award to Tom Huebner, Hattiesburg, assistant professor of communication and director of speech and debate. Ed Leonard, Purvis, director of student life, received the Outstanding Administrator of the Year Award. Associate director of admissions Alissa King, Purvis, received the Outstanding Staff Member of the Year Award. Pictured (from left) are Audrey Morgan, Ed Leonard, Huebner, and Salters.

The National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission has approved the graduate program in nursing at William Carey College's (WCC) Gulfport campus. The implementation of the master's program follows the required approval by the state of Mississippi and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The new program will have an Adult Health major with an education focus and be offered on a full-time or part-time basis. Students interested in the master of science in nursing should call (228) 897-7208 for more information.

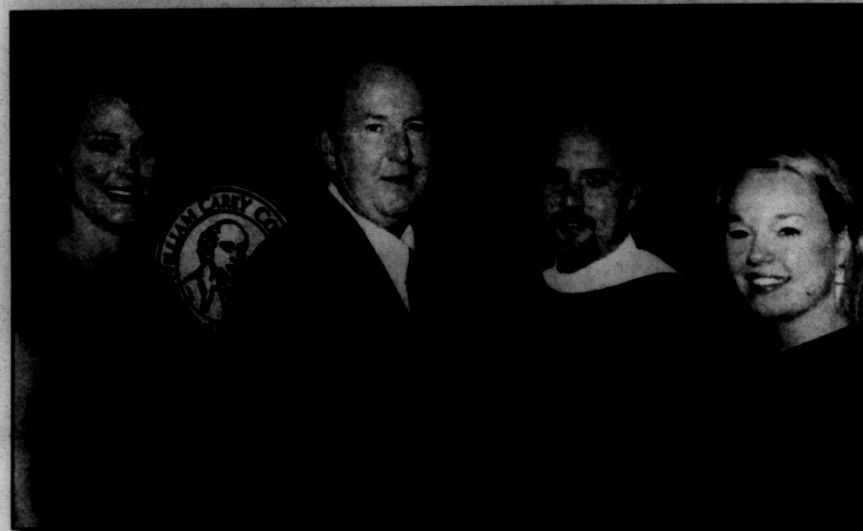
The two top scholastic honors were awarded to Mississippi College (MC) undergraduate graduating seniors Courtney Leigh Irwin, Flora, receiving the Nelson Award and Stacey Denise Gaines, Flora, receiving the Sadler Award. The Nelson Award is given to the student

who maintains the highest academic average for the four-year period with all work taken at Mississippi College. The Sadler



Tilley and Kent

Award is given to the student who maintains the highest academic average at Mississippi College based on two years of work at Mississippi College, after graduating from a community college.



Morgan, Leonard, Huebner, and Salters

Jad Khalaf, a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), was recently presented with the C.C. Randall Award for outstanding student

received the School Spirit Award which is given to a graduating senior by the WCC Alumni Association. The presentation was made by Nancy Kent, alum-



Chuck Kelly, president NOBTS & Jad Khalaf

STATE CHANGES



Woodard

Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall, called Jack Woodard as pastor on February 16. Woodard, a native of Carrollton, Mo., is a graduate of Christian Bible College, Southwest Baptist University, and Luther Rice Seminary.

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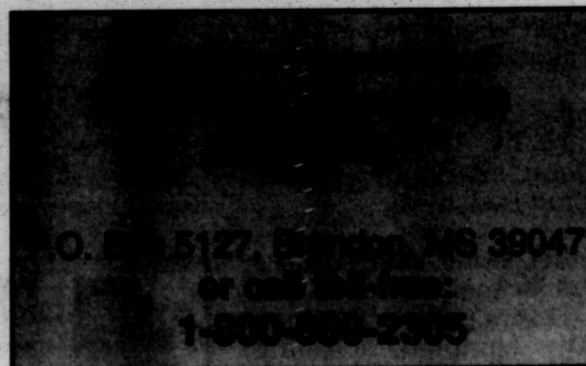
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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name *(John 1:12).*

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Weathersby Church, Mendenhall, ordained Mack Stubbs, Terry Whiteside, and Wayne Lee as deacons on January 26. Pictured (from left) are Foy Killingsworth, pastor, Stubbs, Whiteside, and Lee.

Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall, ordained Larry Jones, Royce Bynum, and Martin Carder, as deacons on April 27. Pictured (from left) are Jones, Bynum, Carder, and Jack Woodard, pastor.

Liberty Church, Jefferson, ordained James Narmour and

Sam Allen Ayers on April 6. Pictured (from left) are Narmour, Paul Miller, pastor, and Ayers.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



Deacons of Liberty Church, Jefferson



Deacons of Weathersby Church, Mendenhall



Deacons of Poplar Springs Church, Mendenhall

HOMECOMING & REVIVAL DATES

Weathersby, Mendenhall: June 1-4; Sunday-Wed., 7 p.m.; Paul Barnard, Eastside, Magee, preaching; Jason Sullivan, Mendenhall, music; Foy Killingsworth, pastor.

Hinkle Creek, Rienzi: June 1; 150th anniversary; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will follow; Kenny Digby, preaching; Paul Stacy, interim pastor.

Knox, Tylertown: May 30-June 1; Fri. and Sat., 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1:30 p.m., dinner on the grounds; John Gibson, NOBTS, evangelist; Adrian Woods, music.

Elmo, Roxie: June 8; worship, 10:30 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; afternoon singing; Kenneth Kent, music; Marvin Curtis, pianist; Darby L. Combs, Oak Grove, Bentonia, speaking.

Bethel, Oxberry: June 1-6; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Neil T. Gant, Pleasant Grove, Grenada, preaching; Larry Livingston, Leflore, Grenada, music; Ray Mattox, Greenwood, pianist; William McDaniel, pastor.

Southside, Lucedale: June 1; Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; lunch will be served; afternoon singing, 1:30 p.m.; Benjy Rigney, music; Jimmy

Byrd, Franklin, N.C., preaching.

West Salem, Richton: June 1; sanctuary dedication, 9:45 a.m.; homecoming, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served; Howard MacArthur Smith, Kellytown Church, Tenn., speaking; The McRaes, music.

Faith, Silver Creek: June 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m., 1:15 p.m., meal at noon; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m. with a meal at 6 p.m.; Gene Douglas, evangelist; Don Weber, pastor.

Coila, Coila: June 1; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch will follow, afternoon singing; James Clark, preaching; Promised, music.

Coila, Coila: June 2-6; Mon.-Fri., 7:30 p.m.; Melvin Mordecai, Starkville, preaching; Promised, music.

Bethel, Water Valley: June 1; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner at noon; Danny Champion, speaking; Linda Williams, music.

Coldwater, Philadelphia: June 8; worship, 10:30 a.m.; a potluck dinner will be served; singing, 1:30 p.m.; Albert McMullen, preaching; Steve Turner, music.

New Goodhope, Pulaski:

June 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and lunch; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Glen Hayman, speaking; John Purvis, pastor.

Indian Springs, Petal: June 1; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served; Jerry Corley, Midway, Panama City, Fla., preaching; Roger and Sharon Blackwell, afternoon worship; Brad Howard, pastor.

Calvary, New Augusta: June 1; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch at noon; afternoon singing; Ronnie Turner, preaching; Steve Lloyd, pastor.

Interstate, Shaw: June 1; worship, 10 and 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; afternoon singing; Jim Phillips, North Greenwood, Greenwood, speaking; North Greenwood Quartet, music; Robert Haney, pastor.

Sardis, Morton: June 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch following; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bud Swindall, evangelist; Frank Smith, music; Scott Mangum, Pastor.

Yellow Leaf, Oxford: June 8, 150th anniversary; worship, 10:30 a.m.; dinner at noon; afternoon services, 1:30 p.m.; Donald Baggett, speaking; Crossbridge, music.

New Fellowship, Hickory: June 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Rob Westbrook, evangelist; Gary Thorne, music; Robert Rowzee, pastor.

Mt. Carmel, Edinburg: June 1-6; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, evangelist; Keith Fulton, pastor.

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JUST FOR THE RECORD

The children's Choir of Gaston Church, Booneville, performed The Story of the Glory of Easter on April 13. Teresa Green and Lisa Holley are choir directors.

Calvary Church, Greenwood, recognized Lucille Braswell, the oldest mother, Laurie Brewer, the youngest mother, and Clara Bond, the mother with the most children, on Mother's Day. Pictured (from left) are Bond, Braswell, and Brewer. Several



Children's Choir of Gaston Church, Booneville

Morris Chapman, Executive Committee, SBC, was the guest speaker at Williamsville Church, Kosciusko, on April 27. Pictured (from left) are Jerry W. East, pastor, and Chapman.

ed) are Destine Ferguson, Anne Smith, Jessica Gregg, (standing) Roy Welch, Nicole Cheek, Jimmy Avant, Amanda Burchfield, and J. W. Campbell.

teen revival, Celebrate Life, in April. Scott Carter and Chris Aldridge were guest speakers, and

Holly Church, Corinth, held a



Chapman and East

Chapel Hill Church, Utica, held a crawfish and shrimp boil on April 26.

Providence Church, Carrollton, gave the Red Cross a helping hand by collecting items needed to send to our troops in Iraq. Pictured (from left, seat-



Providence Church, Carrollton



Bond, Braswell, and Brewer

families (pictured) also took part in the parent/child dedication during that service.

ing hand by collecting items needed to send to our troops in Iraq. Pictured (from left, seat-



Calvary Church Parent/Child Dedication, Greenwood

Eric Kachur was the guest music minister. Tony Morrow is pastor. Twenty-one began celebrating their life in Christ that week.

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LEESVILLE - FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH: Full-time youth and recreation minister. Send resumes with photo to: Youth Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church of Leesville, P.O. Box 1568, 1400 Nolan Trace, Leesville, LA 71446; or email fbcleesville@wnonline.net.

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BYNE MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN Albany, Georgia, is now actively seeking a senior pastor. Interested pastors are asked to contact the chairman of the pastor search committee at the following address: Donald Lanier, 1318 Gail Avenue, Albany, GA 31707. Information about the church can be viewed at www.byn.org.

CHURCH PEWS AVAILABLE FOR donation. to church. Twelve long pews and twelve short pews. If interested, please call First Baptist Church, Newton, Miss. at (601) 683-2066. Ask for Leroy Brewer, pastor.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH COLUMBUS, Miss., is currently accepting resumes for the position of Interim Director of preschool and children's ministries. Please mail resumes to P.O. Box 829, Columbus, MS 39703, attn: Robyn Gaydon.

SLAYDEN BAPTIST CHURCH, Slayden, Miss., (Marshall Association) is seeking an interim music/worship leader. Please contact the church office at (662) 252-4559.

EPHESUS BAPTIST CHURCH OF FOREST is seeking a youth and children's minister. Send resume to 3535 Ephesus Road, Forest, MS 39074 or call 601-469-1731. The job requires 15 hours a week during the school year and full-time during the summer.

POSITION AVAILABLE FOR A FULL-TIME Kindergarten-Day Care Director. Call (601) 372-8651.

ERIC PERKINS, MINISTER TO STUDENTS at Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., has been accepted by the International Mission Board to serve as a

church planter in Uruguay. The church is receiving recommendations for the position of minister to students. Send recommendations to: Harrisburg Baptist Church, attn: Dr. Forrest Sheffield, 4675 Cliff Gookin Blvd., Tupelo, MS 38801.

FRENCH CAMP BAPTIST CHURCH, French Camp, Miss., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Send resume to Bro. Tony Fortenberry, Rt. 1, Box 1a5, French Camp, MS 39745. For more information call (662) 547-6348 after 6:00 p.m.

BETHESDA BAPTIST CHURCH, TERRY, Miss., is currently seeking a pianist to play in all services and rehearsals. For more information, please call (601) 939-1836 or fax inquires to (601) 939-2924.

FRANKLIN BAPTIST CHURCH, FLORA, Miss. is seeking a bivocational youth minister and music minister. Send resume with photo to: search committee, attn: Jo Willett, 2066 Cox Ferry Road, Flora, MS 39071.

Door-to-door effort paying big dividends

CAIRO, Ga. (BP) — Kenneth Cloud is making a believer of folks in Grady County. Cloud, pastor of Midway Church in Cairo, Ga., faced a problem well-known among Christians when he was named director of evangelism for the Grady Association: How do you effectively reach the lost in your community with the Gospel?

Additionally, Cloud sensed that churches in the association needed to be spiritually energized if they were going to impact their communities for Christ. He began with a budget of only \$500 for the entire year's evangelism efforts.

Cloud was familiar with Crossover events that have gained popularity on the state and national level. In that approach, volunteers descend on a city for a weekend evangelistic blitz through a partnership with local churches, but he was seeking a more personal approach that would energize the local churches without having to depend on others from outside the community. It's not that the

volunteers were not wanted, Cloud is quick to say; he was just wanting the churches to accept the responsibility to reach their own neighbors without having to ask volunteers to drive for hours to provide assistance.

The task was formidable: reach 7,400 homes with a Gospel presentation within four weeks — something that had never been accomplished before in the association — with only a \$500 budget.

Today, those who doubted Cloud's initiative are among his biggest supporters. Not only did they reach their goal, but a quickening of the laity has begun that shows no sign of letting up. For four weekends volunteers met on a Saturday morning last fall to focus their door-to-door efforts in a different section of the county. The approach was named Operation Total Contact (OTC).

Cloud and his team of 12 pastors divided the county into various zones. They cross-referenced active church members, including those from churches of other denominations, with their maps and deleted those addresses from the visitation maps, "so we wouldn't waste any time." Each zone required about 14 hours to map out.

Volunteers stuffed thousands of bags with copies of the Gospel of John and the Book of Romans, evangelistic tracts, maps with all the Baptist churches in the association circled, and brochures explaining the association.

Then came the training of the volunteers. Cloud said he and the pastors quickly learned that one of the keys to recruiting volunteers was not requiring them to share the Gospel during visits. For many, being paired with someone who was already a soul-winner took the edge off of the initial encounter.

Jenni Broome, a member of First Church in Cairo, was among those who were hesitant about being a part of the strategy. Hearing the testimonies of those who had participated soon changed her mind.

"I had never gone door-to-door in my

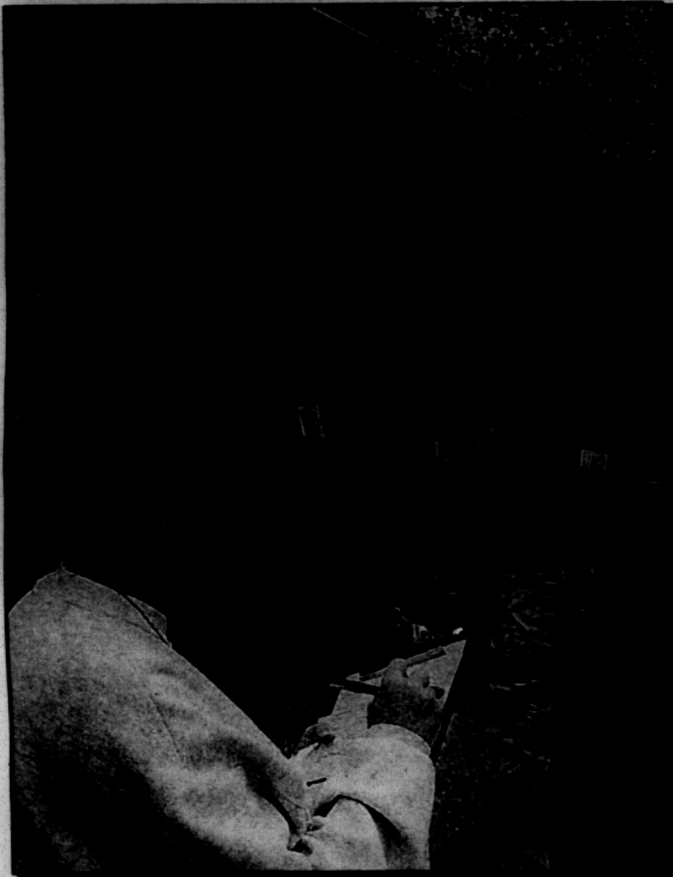
life but I just couldn't ignore the exciting testimonies of those in my church. Every time I turned around someone else was telling me what I was missing. They had such a contagious spirit that I wanted to experience it for myself, and you know what? It was not as scary as I thought."

Kevin Ross, a financial advisor and fellow member at First Church, had a similar experience with a member on his team. "I had an older woman who called and asked to be a part of my team. She made it very clear that she did not want to say a word, she just wanted to go, but when we got out there and had visited three homes, she began to strike up conversions on her own. She started talking to the homeowners and did a wonderful job."

John Paul Hassick, pastor of Gordon Heights Church in Cairo and prayer coordinator for the event, described the response as "a work of God."

"What I'm impressed with is the sense of unity of the churches and the laity who have never turned out to share the Gospel. For each of our four Saturdays we maintained about the same number, between 350-400, but many were new faces. That means we are reaching more laity each week and were not just working to death a handful of the faithful."

Editor's Note: A manual titled, Operation Total Contact, is being developed for distribution through the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) office of evangelization and Grady County Association. For more information, contact the GBC at 1 800-RING-GBC or Grady County Association at (229) 378-9092. Kenneth Cloud can be reached via e-mail at kdcloud@rose.net.



KEEPING TRACK — Jennie Broome makes notes on a visit that has just been completed while her husband Dan heads for another house across the street during a door-to-door visitation initiative in Grady County, Ga. The couple are members of First Church of Cairo, Ga. (BP photo by Joe Westbury)

Anti-abortion campaign set for summer

The Christian Action Group (CAG), an independent pro-life organization headquartered in Jackson, will kick off a statewide summer tour titled, Face the Truth, at 7 p.m. on May 30 at Wesley Biblical Seminary in Jackson. Joe Schiedler of Chicago, a national anti-abortion activist, will be the keynote speaker.

For more information on the campaign, contact C. Roy McMillan at 1004 Buckley Drive, Jackson, MS 39206. Telephone: (601) 981-8377. The Christian Action Group is not affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, an agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Growing disciples key element of youth ministry

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Youth ministry must do more than merely make converts, but must also intentionally grow disciples of Jesus Christ, youth minister Rob Shelton said recently at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

For Shelton, this truth has meant investing 19 years as minister of students at Parkhills Church in San Antonio, Texas. In those 19 years, Shelton has led students to attend and lead in-depth Bible studies, participate in intensive discipleship groups, and develop into readers of college-level books on the Christian worldview.

Making disciples, Shelton said, means helping youth understand that the Christian life involves more than just going to heaven when they die. Rather, it is about living a kingdom-focused life on earth and being the church in a lost world.

Shelton made his comments during a youth ministry conference at the Louisville, Ky., school in April.

"The ministry itself is built around making disciples," Shelton said. "The first step in discipleship is becoming a convert, but that's not the end step. That's not the thing we're aiming at. We're aiming at making disciples with the first step being to deal with the sin in your life and repent as Christ commands so that you can follow Him."

To help other youth ministers produce disciples effectively, Shelton reflected on his own experience and cited four concepts that a youth minister must contemplate.

First, a youth minister must evaluate his role as a pastor.

"What does it mean for me to be a pastor?" he asked. "I came to a stunning realization that I will be judged by Almighty God for what I produce. I'm going to be judged for what I do and how I do it and for what I've done to train these students who have been placed in my charge."

Reflecting on 1 Corinthians 3, Shelton reminded youth ministers of their responsibility to build upon the foundation of the Gospel in students' lives. Second, a youth minister must reflect on his methodology. Too often, Shelton said, youth ministers focus on acting youthful to the exclusion of fulfilling their pastoral roles.

A youth minister's primary task is to produce active followers of Christ, he said, but many youth ministers present the Gospel such that students view the Christian life merely as a safeguard against going to hell.



REACHING YOUTH — Youth minister Rob Shelton (left) talks with 1 Southern Seminary student Patrick Casey following Shelton's recent address at the Louisville, Ky., school. Southern Seminary is Southern Baptists' oldest seminary. (BP photo)

"I could fill a room, and I could get converts, but there were very few people who were following Christ," he said of his past approach to youth ministry. "They were just converts. That kind of struck me. I was presenting Christianity as a present for those seeking postmortem bliss. That's how I was presenting it. There was no understanding of why Christianity was relevant now."

Third, a youth minister must implement a specific plan for the

task of disciple-making. More specifically, he must consider whether his current methods of teaching are producing disciples.

By using mass media and pop culture as teaching tools, youth ministers often inadvertently portray the Gospel as a commodity to be consumed rather than truth to be obeyed, Shelton said.

"It's not going to be easy," he said. "You're going to stick out, but I think when you stand before the judgment seat one day, it will be worth it."

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

The Church: Evangelizing the Lost

Matthew 9:35-38; Romans 10:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

By Karen Hollowell

Did you know that you are an ambassador? When one considers this position from the present worldly definition, honor and great responsibility come to mind. It is no different for believers we are Christ's ambassadors, His spokespeople, with the responsibility of helping to evangelize a lost world.

You may not think of yourself as an evangelist any more than an ambassador, but Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 5:20 that as Christ's messengers, "God is making His appeal through us for others to be reconciled to God."

God has indeed called people into the specific evangelistic ministries, especially missionaries. We are instructed by Jesus to pray for these "harvesters" (Matt. 9:35-38).

Churches throughout the SBC participate in various mission emphases every year through special offerings. Regardless of our ability to contribute monetarily to these programs, prayer is one thing we all can give in obedience to Jesus' teaching.

In Romans 10:13, we are told that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"; however, in the next verse we see the great responsibility this involves: "how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" Proclamation of the gospel is usually associated with preachers. It is important to note here that sharing the Good News is a mandate for every believer. Corporately,

Hollowell

American and International Mission programs is a wonderful thing, but we cannot forget our immediate field of harvest.

Sunday School is one major facet of evangelism through the church. Many people can testify that they came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through God's use of a Sunday School lesson or by speaking through the words of the teacher or another member. Sunday School is also beneficial in the aspect of teaching members about witnessing. Many people often don't share the gospel because they don't know what to say. Sunday School can provide the environment that encourages

churches must seek to fulfill the role of God's messengers.

Evangelism of the lost is sometimes laid aside because of church programs and other business. Bringing the Good News to the lost is the business of the church. Again, participation in North

participation through Bible study and group accountability.

Of course, our personal witness cannot be emphasized enough. Although we may be hindered by fear, timidity, or uncertainty, we are compelled to share the gospel with unbelievers. Individual dedication to prayer, study of the Word, and our personal and public Christian walk will prepare us to be able to witness when the Lord presents those opportunities.

We are also ambassadors in actions as well as words. 2 Cor. 14-16, while assuring us that "Christ died for all" (meaning salvation is available to all but a reality only in those who have accepted Jesus by faith), exhorts us to "regard no one from a worldly point of view." We are to see the lost as needy people without hope and help lead them to the ultimate Source of all hope. This is most often done through Christians' actions and attitudes. Are we judgmental and skeptical, or do we view encountering the lost as an inconvenient obstacle? The local church (collective-

ly and individually) can become a mighty tool of evangelism in the community through an outreach of love. Jesus had great compassion for the people (Matt. 9:36). Like Him, this compassion should motivate and compel us to reach out, not only to unbelievers, but also to other Christians. How Christian brothers and sisters treat each other speaks volumes to the lost about the credibility of genuine Godly love. The theme for this month's Sunday School lessons is "The Church: God's Community of Grace." We need to ask ourselves if the church we belong to or attend can be considered part of this community. Also, how are we working individually and with others to make this a reality for our church or have we been hindering the outreach of grace?

Christ, because of His great love, became our sin atonement. Can we do no less than to show our great love for Him by sharing it with those in our "world"?

Hollowell is member of Crosby Church, Crosby.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Stand Up for the Gospel

Galatians 1:1-24

By Kiely Young

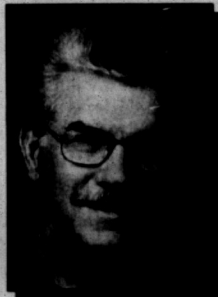
A nervous young pastor sat before his ordination council answering question after question about his doctrinal beliefs and his call to ministry. As the process began to come to a close, one deacon asked the young pastor, "Young man, what will you do if this ordination council chooses not to ordain you as a minister?" The young man thought for a minute and then responded, "Sir, with all respect and appreciation for this council, I will continue to preach. That is what God has called me to do. I will just have to preach without your blessing, but under His call." The deacon responded, "Well done, I recommend he be ordained." This young man, like Paul understood what it means to take a firm

stand for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There was a real issue of the truth of the Gospel Paul had to deal with in the churches of Galatia. They needed to understand there is only one way for deliverance from man's sin.

I. Understand the Basics. (vv. 1-5) Paul uses his familiar, but powerful, greeting of "Grace and Peace to you" which are the foundation blocks of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father enabled by the Holy Spirit. The grace of God's love for forgiveness of sin must be experienced before the peace of God that passes all understanding can be enjoyed.

Paul reminds us this grace and peace is from God through Jesus, "who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present age." The



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work of Christ on our behalf must be understood, believed, and received by us as an act of faith before we can receive the benefits of God's grace and peace. This, says Paul is "according to the will of our God and Father."

II. Reject Perversions. (vv. 6-9) Paul minces no words in stating his opinion, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another." Some try to take away from this truth, while others try to add to it. The Judaizers were on Paul's case saying that the Gospel was not enough; the believers must also keep the Law and be circumcised.

Paul is writing the Galatians to reaffirm what he taught them and to give them solid understanding of the truth. There is only one way to have our sins forgiven and receive the promise of eternal life. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except

through Me." Paul had personally experienced a life rigid under the keeping of the Law. No one had been more zealous than he. He had also experienced the life transforming power of God on the Damascus road and he knew first hand the truth about Jesus. There is absolute truth. It is founded upon the Gospel of Christ. It stands against and above all opposition.

III. Affirm the Source. (vv. 10-12) Paul takes the position of the bondservant of Christ to present the truth of Christ as it was given to him through the revelation of Jesus Christ. He said he did not desire to "persuade or please men," but "to make known...the gospel of Christ." This gospel came not from men but "through the revelation of Christ."

We are messengers of the gospel. We cannot add to it or take away from it. It is God who calls us by the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He will bring us to the realization that we can experience forgiveness only through faith in Jesus Christ.

The former world champion boxer George Foreman was on a flight when he heard a minister responding to questions from a businessman about the truths of scripture. When the minister sensed the businessman might be ready to respond to the Gospel, he asked him if he might share with the businessman how he could ask Christ to be his Savior. The businessman shunned the minister for such a suggestion implying Christians are always trying to coerce others to become Christians. The minister was taken back by the response. About that time, the big imposing figure of George Foreman rose up from the seat behind and said, "Hey mister, you better shut up and listen, this man is telling you the truth." With that strong word of encouragement, the man listened intently.

Let us all take heed and stand strong for the TRUTH, Jesus Christ, Savior.

Young is director of the Sunday School Dept. of the Miss. Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be accompanied by a contact person's name, address, and telephone number.



Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

Please make articles concise. Include what, when, where details of the event, and a contact person's name, address, and telephone number.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

NAMB initiative well-received among laity

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — A new North American Mission Board (NAMB) emphasis on affirming God's call on the lives of laypeople

will answer God's call "to be on mission where I live." A total of 309 people were interested in short-term mission opportunities, 78 sought information on

full-time opportunities and 1,123 committed to prayer for NAMB missionaries.

NAMB President Robert E. Reccord said the results are just the latest affirmation he's seen of a central message he and the entity's leadership team have been putting forth since January.

"We have made it sound for a lot of years — unintentionally — like the highest call that God gives is to be a vocational minister or missionary," he said. "That's a very important call, and God calls those people to go to the frontiers and be the equippers, but we must move to helping the student understand that they're called to be on mission to their campus, and the professional person to understand that their vocational occupation is a platform for mission, and the business person — as well as the housewife who pours her life into her kids," Reccord said.

"We have inadvertently too often left the impression that it is primarily the minister and missionary that are called by God to change their world," he added. "But Scripturally it is every Christ-follower who is commissioned to be on mission, beginning right where they are."

Closely related to the concept is the theme that has become NAMB's central message this year, "Answer His Call. Tell His Story. Change your world."

The response also has come from people talking with Reccord after speaking engagements, including three Sunday morning services at Johnson Ferry on May 4.

"I had a very successful businessman come to me with tears running down his cheeks," Reccord said. "He said, 'I never thought about my business as a platform where I could be on mission. But starting Monday I'm looking on my business life in a whole different manner.'"

Another lady said "this is the most freeing message I can remember, because it makes me sense that God has called me right where he's placed me," he said.

The response has also been unusually strong after two recent speaking engagements on college campuses. "What I'm really focused on is year-

round missions right where you are, but that just doesn't happen," Reccord said. "You've got to be intentional."

"One college professor told me he had never thought about emphasizing God's calling being found in settings like teaching, business, medicine and law — but now he planned to start clarifying that message," he added. "If we are ever going to have a movement of on-mission Christ-followers changing their world it is going to have to start in their homes, neighborhoods and work places where God has placed them and called them."

Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Church, said Reccord's message resonated with a congregation that was already tuned in to the importance of lay ministry, with about one fourth of Sunday morning attendance regularly participating in mission trips and 2,800 people committed to some sort of ministry through the church.

"I've received many comments from not only our staff but our congregation of how powerful his message was, how well he related to our congregation and how clear he challenged everyone to be in ministry," he said. "That really connected because of the church culture we have with those priorities ourselves."



MINISTRY MOMENT — Brittain Elliott (left) shares her ministry as mission ministries specialist for the Spartanburg (S.C.) County Baptist Network during a North American Mission Board commissioning service May 4 as NAMB president Robert E. "Bob" Reccord looks on. The service was held at Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga. (BP photo by James Dotson)

apparently is striking a chord, prompting some of the strongest responses from audiences since the entity was formed in 1997.

A May 4 commissioning service for 57 missionaries at Johnson Ferry Church in Marietta, Ga., resulted in a record 1,137 response cards from individuals willing to say they

will answer God's call "to be on mission where I live." A total of 309 people were interested in short-term mission opportunities, 78 sought information on full-time opportunities and 1,123 committed to prayer for NAMB missionaries.

Missionaries mourn loss of 12-year-old daughter

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Even in death, as she had in life, Aimee Elizabeth Milstead, the 12-year-old daughter of Southern Baptist missionaries Grady and Claire Milstead, continued to make a difference in the lives of hundreds as they gathered May 22 in Pensacola, Fla., for a memorial service.

Nearly 300 attended the service at Olive Church to memorialize Aimee and to pay their respects to the family gathered from as far away as Argentina, South Korea, and Alaska. Aimee died suddenly May 15 in Trelew, Argentina, where she lived with her parents who have served as career missionaries with the International Mission Board (IMB) since 1985. She was at school when she suffered a seizure.

IMB President Jerry Rankin offered words of appreciation for Aimee and for the witness her family has perpetuated through their sacrificial ministry. "Aimee was so fortunate to be born into a family that knew and loved the Lord," Rankin told listeners. "Multitudes of children around the world never have this opportunity."

Calling Grady and Claire Milstead "faithful, dedicated missionaries," Rankin said they have "a heart" for reaching the people of Argentina for Christ. [Aimee's] death is a reminder that life is brief and

none of us know how long we have," Rankin said. "Our lives should be used to share the Gospel every chance we get."

David Corson, church administrator at Olive Church, told the Florida Baptist Witness there were memorial flowers arrangements and a picture of Aimee on a "little easel" at the front of the church. He said U.S. Customs had not released Aimee's body from the airport in New Orleans in time for the funeral, so it became necessary to hold a memorial service instead. A graveside service was held May 23 at Pensacola Gardens.

"I really sensed a feeling of hope, and the family was encouraged by all the people who attended," Corson said. Especially moving was an unusual rendition of the popular hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," sung in both English and in Spanish, he added.

W. G. Robertson, pastor of Bellview Baptist Church in Bellview, Ala., and long-time friend and mentor of the Milstead family, brought a message from 1 Peter, Corson said.

Describing what Robertson called "two sides of the same event," Corson said there are two groups for Aimee — those



Aimee Elizabeth Milstead

who stand on earth's shore saying "goodbye," and those who are standing in heaven saying "welcome home."

The three other Milstead children joining their family at the memorial service were Melissa Milstead McCue, 26, Zach, 23, and Jacob 18.

In a Witness interview, Zach described his little sister Aimee, a seventh-grade student at La Escuela Nueva (The New School) in Trelew, as a "very sweet" girl with a penchant for playing the piano and acting. Aimee previ-

ously suffered a seizure in December 2001, Zach said, after performing in a musical put on by MKs (missionary kids) during a missions meeting for Argentine Baptists. At that time the family went to the Pensacola area, where they were previously members of First Church, Pensacola, for Aimee to receive medical attention.

The Milstead family returned to Argentina this past December, according to Zach, who recently graduated from the University of West Florida. He said Aimee's condition, called dysautonomia, was thought to be under control at that time.

He said the family is appreciative of what he described as "a tremendous outpouring of love and prayer from the missionary families in Argentina and in the states, and from the churches and the Florida Baptist Convention."

Eighteen-year-old Jacob is scheduled to begin school at William Carey College in Hattiesburg in the fall.

Zach's wife, Becky Milstead, is the daughter of James W. Robinett, pastor of First Church in Live Oak, Fla., who told the Witness Aimee was "the little sister that my daughter had never had, but wanted."

"She was a fine Christian young lady and we thought the world of her," Robinett said. "We grieve for the family."

Bibliocipher

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YH RMOV WOFGNYO
RMHN GPR XNAOJGPU,
GVS VOERMOP FHXS
VHP MHR, E JEXX
YQNO RMOO HNR
HB UI UHNRM.
POLOXGREHV
RMPOO: YECROOV

Clue: F = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: James 2:8